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Recent Developments in New Testament Textual Criticism

H.A.G. Houghton

The digital revolution has made textual criticism one of the most exciting and rapidly developing fields of New Testament study. In a discipline where one of the maxims is that "Knowledge of documents should precede final judgement upon readings,"¹ the ready availability of images over the internet offers scholars immediate access to manuscripts thousands of miles apart and enables them to become familiar with a far wider range of witnesses than previously possible. The limitations of printed books in which constraints of space resulted in the compression of the evidence, privileging an editor's reconstructed text and cramming variant readings into a highly-abbreviated critical apparatus, have now been overcome by online editions in which each manuscript is presented in full and users can customise the display to suit their own requirements. The creation of full text electronic transcriptions means that data can be analysed and compared as never before, leading to the identification of new textual relationships and the development of innovative editorial techniques. Finally, the same technology affords the potential for scholarly collaboration in a way that was hardly imaginable a few decades ago. The task facing modern editors is to work together to make the textual tradition of the New Testament available in this new medium in a way which is comprehensive, accurate and durable and so enable this paradigm shift to become embedded in the heart of New Testament studies.²

1. Editions

The current hand editions of the New Testament, the Nestle–Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (NA27) and the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* (UBS4) share the same editorial text but offer different forms of the critical apparatus, with UBS intended for the use of translators. For more information on variant readings, scholars still turn to the classic editions of Tischendorf³ and von Soden,⁴ but these are now being replaced by the *Novum Testamentum Graecum – Editio Critica Maior* (ECM), which will also eventually lead to the revision of the hand editions. Produced under the aegis of the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF) in Münster, the ECM is a thorough presentation of the transmission of the New Testament in the first millennium, combining the reconstruction of the 'initial text' (*Ausgangstext*) which underlies the surviving documents with a fuller critical apparatus than any previous edition. To date, only the fourth volume has been published, covering the Catholic Epistles. Work is currently underway on the ECM of Acts and John, the latter in collaboration with the International Greek New Testament Project (IGNTP), and the entire New Testament is scheduled for completion by 2030.

¹ B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek. Introduction and Appendix* (Second edition. London: Macmillan, 1896), 31.

² See further D.C. Parker, "Through a Screen Darkly: Digital Texts and the New Testament," *JSNT* 25.4 (2003): 395–411; reprinted in D.C. Parker, *Manuscripts, Texts, Theology. Collected Papers 1977–2007* (ANTF 40. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 287–304.

³ Constantin Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece ... Editio Octava Critica Maior* (Leipzig: Giesecke & Devrient, 1869–72).

⁴ H. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt* (Göttingen & Berlin: Glaue, 1902–13).

Preliminary work towards forthcoming volumes of the *ECM* is already available in both printed and electronic form. The choice of witnesses has been made through a comprehensive investigation of selected variants (*Teststellen*) in all surviving manuscripts, published as *Text und Textwert* (*TuT*).⁵ These volumes provide the readings of all manuscripts for each *Teststelle* and statistics indicating their relationship to the whole tradition and the witnesses to which they correspond most closely. Manuscripts which differ sufficiently from the Majority Text will be transcribed in full for the *ECM*. This analysis is almost complete: one of the final contributions will be a comparison of John 18 in 2,000 manuscripts undertaken by the IGNTP. The IGNTP has already published its apparatus of the majuscule manuscripts of John,⁶ with a companion electronic edition at <http://www.iohannes.com/majuscule/>⁷ including full transcriptions of all witnesses. Transcriptions of papyri and minuscule manuscripts can be found as work in progress at <http://www.iohannes.com/IGNTPtranscripts/>.

The next printed hand edition, NA28, will be complemented by an electronic version providing transcriptions of the most important manuscripts and a complete apparatus.⁸ Much of this is already available at the prototype *New Testament Transcripts* site, <http://nttranscripts.uni-muenster.de/>, which allows the user to alternate between the critical edition with editorial text and apparatus (as well as links to a dictionary) and transcriptions reproducing the page layout of every manuscript with an apparatus giving the full reading of all the other witnesses for each verse and variant readings highlighted. Although the text and apparatus of NA27 are available in several commercial biblical software packages, links to the full transcriptions are only accessible through the free online editions.

The edition of Jude by Wasserman⁹ is the most comprehensive of any book, based on all 560 Greek continuous-text manuscripts. This offers an interesting comparison with the *ECM* Jude, published only a year earlier and using 140 manuscripts selected by the *TuT* method. Wasserman's collation brought to light numerous new readings as well as further support for poorly-attested variants. Nonetheless, while these are of significance in determining manuscript relationships and the history of interpretation (which are handled in detail in his textual commentary), Wasserman's reconstructed editorial text of the epistle only differs from the *ECM* on four occasions, all well-known points of variation.

Other recent editions focus on particular manuscripts or forms of text. In Swanson's *New Testament Greek Manuscripts*,¹⁰ Codex Vaticanus is the principal text with other text-forms from up to fifty manuscripts aligned underneath. The nine published volumes run from Matthew to Galatians; following Swanson's death it is unclear whether the series will be completed. The *Marc Multilingue* project proposes to present several manuscripts

⁵ *Text und Textwert der griechischen Handschriften des neuen Testaments* (ANTF 9–11, 16–21, 27–31, 35–6. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987–2005).

⁶ U.B. Schmid, ed., with W.J. Elliott and D.C. Parker, *The New Testament in Greek IV. The Gospel According to St. John. Volume Two: The Majuscules* (NTTSD 37. Leiden: Brill, 2007).

⁷ All websites cited in this survey were last accessed on 19th April 2010.

⁸ See <http://nestlealand.uni-muenster.de/>.

⁹ Tommy Wasserman, *The Epistle of Jude: Its Text and Transmission* (ConBNT 43. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006).

¹⁰ Reuben J. Swanson, *New Testament Manuscripts. Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines Against Codex Vaticanus* (Pasadena: William Carey International UP, 1995–2005).

representing early forms of Mark with a facing French translation of each.¹¹ Mullen's edition of the Byzantine text of John presents a single manuscript, minuscule 35, as a reading text, with variants from a selection of Byzantine witnesses including five early Greek Fathers in the apparatus.¹² A second edition of the Robinson–Pierpont Majority/Byzantine text, comprising the whole New Testament, was published in 2005.¹³

Several ongoing projects to edit early versions of the New Testament are associated with the ECM, such as the Old Latin version of Acts in preparation at the University of Mainz¹⁴ and editions of the Syriac, Coptic and Old Latin translations of John.¹⁵ Versional evidence is also central to the concept of *Marc Multilingue*. A fifth edition of the Stuttgart Vulgate was published in 2007, the apparatus taking account of Gryson's edition of Revelation in the *Vetus Latina* series, although the editorial text remains unchanged.¹⁶ The Vetus Latina-Institut has also produced complete registers of Old Latin manuscripts (in which the inadequate alphabetical sigla have been replaced by numbers) and Latin Church Fathers: these now function as the standard works of reference.¹⁷ Other recent publications include an edition of John in Ethiopic¹⁸ and various tools for the investigation of the Syriac versions.¹⁹ The use of conjectural emendation in editions of the New Testament is currently being studied in Amsterdam.²⁰

2. Manuscripts

The *New Testament Virtual Manuscript Room*, <http://intf.uni-muenster.de/vmr/NTVMR/IndexNTVMR.php>, offers an ideal first port of call for scholars seeking information on any New Testament manuscript. The site includes an online version of the *Kurzgefasste Liste* (the register of all Greek New Testament manuscripts)²¹ with the Gregory–Aland number by

¹¹ J.K. Elliott, C.-B. Amphoux and J.-C. Haelewyck, "The *Marc Multilingue* Project," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 15 (2002) 3–17; the most recent samples can be downloaded from

<http://www.safran.be/marcmultilingue/>.

¹² Roderic L. Mullen with Simon Crisp and D.C. Parker, ed., *The Gospel according to John in the Byzantine Tradition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007). An electronic edition is online at

<http://www.iohannes.com/byzantine/>.

¹³ Maurice A. Robinson and William G. Pierpont, ed., *The New Testament in the Original Greek. Byzantine Textform* (Southborough MA: Chilton, 2005).

¹⁴ <http://nttf.klassphil.uni-mainz.de/>.

¹⁵ Work on John is listed on the "Projects" page of <http://www.igntp.org/>. An electronic edition of the Old Latin manuscripts of John is available at <http://www.iohannes.com/vetuslatina/>.

¹⁶ R. Weber, R. Gryson et al., ed., *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem* (Fifth edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007).

¹⁷ R. Gryson, ed., *Altlateinische Handschriften. Manuscripts Vieux Latins. Répertoire descriptif. 1. Mss 1–275. 2. Mss 300–485* (Vetus Latina 1/2. Freiburg: Herder, 1999 & 2004); *id.*, *Répertoire général des auteurs ecclésiastiques latins de l'antiquité et du haut moyen âge* (2 vols. Vetus Latina 1/1. Freiburg: Herder, 2007).

¹⁸ Michael G. Wechsler, ed., *Evangelium Iohannis Aethiopicum* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005).

¹⁹ P.J. Williams, *Early Syriac Translation Technique and the Textual Criticism of the Greek Gospels* (TS 3.2. Piscataway NJ: Gorgias, 2004); George A. Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshitta and Harklean Versions* (Third edition, four vols. Piscataway NJ: Gorgias, 2004).

²⁰ e.g. Jan Krans, *Beyond What Is Written. Erasmus and Beza as Conjectural Critics of the New Testament* (NTTSD 35. Leiden: Brill, 2006).

²¹ K. Aland et al, *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments* (ANTF 1. Second edition. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994). A supplement is available from the INTF website, but the online *Liste* is the most up-to-date.

which each is identified and details of current location, content and physical characteristics. For certain witnesses, the bibliographic records maintained by the INTF have also been scanned and appended. In the Virtual Manuscript Room itself, users have the option of browsing a complete set of digital images of a New Testament manuscript or reading an individual witness page by page alongside an electronic transcription linked from *New Testament Transcripts*. Full images of over one hundred manuscripts are already available on this site: many are open access, while others (mostly scans of microfilm) are currently restricted to registered scholars. A further feature of the site is the indexing tool for recording the content of each page: once this has been completed for a manuscript, users can navigate the images by biblical reference rather than simply by page number. This also means that any verse can be instantly located in all indexed manuscripts.

The standard for online manuscript presentation has been set by the new electronic edition of Codex Sinaiticus, at <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/>. This international collaboration between the four institutions holding parts of the manuscript means that all surviving leaves are now reunited online. The site includes the first edition of fragments of the Old Testament and the Shepherd of Hermas found in Sinai in 1975. Conservation work was carried out at each location before high-resolution images were taken. Along with these, the edition includes a full transcription of the entire manuscript, recording all details of scribes, corrections, annotations and page layout. This affords the potential for renewed study of the textual characteristics of the manuscript, including the activity of each corrector. The transcription and image are interlinked, so that clicking on a word in one will highlight its occurrence in the other: this and the translations provided mean that the edition will also be a valuable teaching tool.

The most important newly-discovered New Testament manuscript is P127, a fifth-century copy of the Acts of the Apostles containing parts of six chapters. A full transcription of this papyrus, P. Oxy. 4968, is given with a textual commentary in the latest volume of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*.²² This early witness is particularly interesting because it preserves a previously unknown free version of Acts. The Greek text of this book is often described in terms of two principal recensions, a shorter form represented by Codex Vaticanus and a longer version found in Codex Bezae.²³ The new form is distinct from both of these: in keeping with a move away from classification by 'text-types,' discussed below, it proves that a binary approach to the text of Acts is inadequate and instead offers more evidence for textual diversity in the earliest traditions of the New Testament.

Other manuscript discoveries in the last decade include fragments of John and three Epistles among the *Oxyrhynchus papyri*:²⁴ and five majuscule fragments from later book bindings.²⁵

²² D.C. Parker & S.R. Pickering, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri LXXIV* (London: The Egypt Exploration Society, 2009), 1–45.

²³ Even before the discovery of P127, the situation was known to be more complex: D.C. Parker, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 286–9 offers a summary.

²⁴ J.K. Elliott, "Four New Papyri Containing the Fourth Gospel and their Relevance for the Apparatus Criticus," *JTS* 59.2 (2008): 674–8; *id.*, "Oxyrhynchitica" *NovT* 50 (2008): 407–9.

²⁵ P.M. Head, "Five New Testament Manuscripts: Recently Discovered Fragments in a Private Collection in Cambridge," *JTS* 59.2 (2008): 520–45; *id.* "A Newly Discovered Manuscript of Luke's Gospel (De Hamel MS 386; Gregory–Aland 0312" in *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their Worlds* ed. Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas (TENTS 2, Leiden: Brill, 2006), 105–20.

Parts of P75 which were brought to light several years ago during conservation work and already included in NA27 have been edited in their own right.²⁶ The Texas-based Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts has been particularly active in making high quality digital images of entire manuscripts, many of which are freely available on their website together with some scanned facsimiles (<http://www.csntm.org/>): its recent expeditions have resulted in the discovery of several previously unidentified witnesses, including eleven minuscules and lectionaries in Albania in 2007. Cataloguing in progress at the Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos has resulted in the addition of no fewer than twenty manuscripts to the *Liste*; other minuscules and lectionaries have been located in Eastern Europe and the USA.²⁷ A new manuscript has even been found in Oxford, having escaped the notice of scholars for centuries.²⁸ The tools now at textual critics' disposal mean that new witnesses can easily be compared with the rest of the tradition and integrated into electronic editions.

There have also been developments in the dating of certain manuscripts. The Freer Gospels (032, W), famous for their unique text in the Longer Ending of Mark, were initially assigned to the fourth or fifth century. However, following the redating of the manuscripts used for the original comparison and the subsequent discovery of similar material, including the Cologne Mani Codex, Schmid has suggested that it may have been copied at least a century later.²⁹ Parker and Birdsall's consideration of the palaeography and catena of Codex Zacynthius (040, Ξ) prompt them to propose a date of around 700 for the majuscule underwriting, rather than Hatch's suggestion of the sixth century.³⁰ The date of the earliest surviving fragment of the New Testament, P52, has also been the subject of a recent review by Nongbri.³¹ This cautions against the uncritical adoption of the earliest suggested date of 125 CE and demonstrates that a date in the late second or early third centuries remains palaeographically possible. As more and more comparative material becomes available online, it will not be surprising if the dating of other manuscripts is reassessed.

Over the last decade there has been a lively debate about the function of pairs of dots in the margin of Codex Vaticanus (03, B). Various described as "umlauts" or "distigmai," it has been claimed that these double dots serve a text-critical function as their occurrence often coincides with a place of textual variation in a modern critical edition.³² Their significance may also depend on whether they are contemporary with the production of the manuscript or were added later. Recent scholarly responses proposing a sixteenth-century origin for the

²⁶ Marie-Luise Lakmann, "Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75). Neue Fragmente," *Museum Helveticum* 64 (2007): 22–41; James M. Robinson, "Fragments from the Cartonnage of P75," *HTR* 101 (2008): 231–52.

²⁷ D.C. Parker and M.B. Morrill, "Some New Manuscripts of the Greek New Testament in Boston and Cambridge," *HTR* 95.1 (2002): 237–44; D.C. Parker, "Greek Gospel Manuscripts in Bucharest and Sofia," *BJRL* 85 (2003): 3–12; both are reprinted in Parker, *Manuscripts, Texts, Theology*.

²⁸ Andrew J. Brown, "The Gospel Commentary of Theophylact, and a Neglected Manuscript in Oxford" *NovT* 49.2 (2007): 185–96.

²⁹ Ulrich Schmid, "Reassessing the Palaeography and Codicology of the Freer Gospel Manuscript," in *The Freer Biblical Manuscripts: Fresh Studies of an American Treasure Trove* ed. Larry W. Hurtado (SBLTCS 6. Atlanta GA: SBL, 2006), 227–49.

³⁰ D.C. Parker and J. Neville Birdsall, "The Date of Codex Zacynthius (Ξ): A New Proposal," *JTS* 55.1 (2004): 117–31 (reprinted in Parker, *Manuscripts, Texts, Theology*, 113–20).

³¹ Brent Nongbri, "The Use and Abuse of P⁵²: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel," *HTR* 98.1 (2005): 23–48.

³² See, for example, Philip B. Payne and Paul Canart, "The Originality of Text-Critical Symbols in Codex Vaticanus," *NovT* 42.2 (2000): 105–13; C.-B. Amphoux, "Codex Vaticanus B: Les points diacritiques des marges de Marc" *JTS* 58.2 (2007): 440–66.

double dots have cast doubt on the antiquity of the phenomenon.³³ One mystery which has been satisfactorily solved concerns minuscule 2427. Acquired by the University of Chicago in 1936, it became known as "Archaic Mark" because of the remarkable similarity between the text of this very late witness and Codex Vaticanus. It had long been suggested that it may have been copied from a nineteenth-century critical edition based on the latter, and in 2006 Stephen Carlson identified its source as Buttmann's *Novum Testamentum Graece*. The manuscript's inauthenticity has been further proven by comprehensive investigation of its materials.³⁴ It will therefore no longer be included in the apparatus of critical editions.

3. Citational Evidence

Quotations of the New Testament in Christian authors are an important source for forms of text known in a particular place and time, and may provide additional information not preserved in surviving manuscripts. *Biblia Patristica*, which aimed to assemble a complete list of biblical quotations, ceased in 2000 after producing seven volumes covering the earliest authors. The files have now been taken over by a team based at Sources Chrétiennes: the online database at <http://www.bibindex.org/> also includes unpublished collections of material covering John Chrysostom, Athanasius of Alexandria and Jerome, making some 400,000 references in total. The current version does not include the actual text cited by each author, but plans are underway to provide this and to expand the site. At present, however, the powerful search facilities of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG; <http://www.tlg.uci.edu/>) and the Brepols *Library of Latin Texts* (LLT-A; access through <http://brepolis.net/>) mean that scriptural quotations can be identified in modern critical editions of many texts.

The SBL New Testament in the Greek Fathers series offers critical reconstructions of biblical books from an author's citations and an indication of their textual characteristics using a statistical profiling method: the latest volumes consider Basil of Caesarea,³⁵ Epiphanius of Salamis,³⁶ and Clement of Alexandria.³⁷ Other text-critical work on Christian authors includes monographs on Eusebius of Caesarea³⁸ and Augustine.³⁹ Schmid has shown that Marcion and Tatian's *Diatessaron* must be used with extreme caution, while later Gospel Harmony traditions are of very limited value for biblical textual criticism.⁴⁰

³³ At the SBL Annual Meeting in New Orleans, November 2009, Peter Head showed that the sequence of marginalia indicates that the double dots are secondary; he also referred to Curt Niccum's proposal that the double dots were added by J. G. de Sepulveda who is known to have compared Codex Vaticanus with Erasmus' New Testament.

³⁴ Margaret M. Mitchell, Joseph G. Barabe and Abigail B. Quandt, "Chicago's 'Archaic Mark' (ms 2427) II. Microscopic, Chemical and Codicological Analyses confirm Modern Production," *NovT* 52.2 (2010): 101–33.

³⁵ Jean-François Racine, *The Text of Matthew in the Writings of Basil of Caesarea* (SBLNTGF 5, Atlanta GA: SBL, 2004).

³⁶ Carroll D. Osburn, *The Text of the Apostolos in Epiphanius of Salamis* (SBLNTGF 6, Atlanta GA: SBL, 2004).

³⁷ Carl P. Cosaert, *The Text of the Gospels in Clement of Alexandria* (SBLNTGF 9, Atlanta GA: SBL, 2008).

³⁸ Sylvia Nielsen, *Euseb von Cäsarea und das Neue Testament. Methoden und Kriterien zur Verwendung von Kirchenväterzitaten innerhalb der neutestamentlichen Textforschung* (Regensburg: Roderer, 2003)

³⁹ H.A.G. Houghton, *Augustine's Text of John: Patristic Citations and Latin Gospel Manuscripts* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

⁴⁰ U.B. Schmid, "How Can We Access Second-Century Gospel Texts? The Cases of Marcion and Tatian," in *The New Testament Text in Early Christianity* ed. C.-B. Amphoux and J.K. Elliott (Histoire du texte biblique 6. Lausanne: Zèbre, 2003), 139–50; *id.*, *Unum ex Quattuor. Eine Geschichte der lateinischen Tatianüberlieferung*, (AGLB 37. Freiburg: Herder, 2005).

A recent article by Osburn on the identification and categorisation of New Testament citations concludes that "simple verbal precision in a patristic quotation is sometimes insufficient for including it in determining the reading of a Father's biblical exemplar ... Each citation should be read in its patristic context in order to determine more precisely how the text is actually used and in what way it probably reflects a text known to the Father."⁴¹ In a similar vein, a distinction has been proposed between *primary* and *secondary* citations based on whether contextual considerations indicate that their text was taken from a codex.⁴² Many secondary citations may in fact represent an author's 'mental text,' showing features typical of 'flattening' (minor adjustment characteristic of quotations from memory). One could reformulate the dictum quoted above as "Knowledge of *sources* should precede final judgement upon readings" in order to apply it also to patristic material. As electronic databases make possible a more comprehensive survey of biblical quotations, familiarity with each author's citation technique is key to ensuring the correct deployment of their evidence for the text of the New Testament.

4. Methodology

The adoption of electronic tools in editing the New Testament has led to several important methodological advances. Chief among these is a shift away from producing manuscript collations in the form of a list of variations from a specified base text to making full transcriptions of each witness.⁴³ Having a separate file for every manuscript means not only that full transcriptions can be published as part of an electronic edition and that the same material can be reused for subsequent editions, but also that witnesses can be compared against each other in their entirety and analysed using a variety of software. For instance, phylogenetic techniques developed within evolutionary biology have proved remarkably well suited to the analysis of manuscript relationships.⁴⁴

The Coherence Based Genealogical Method (CBGM) developed by Gerd Mink is a major advance in the reconstruction of the initial text.⁴⁵ This tool assists textual critics in assessing the origin of different readings within a highly contaminated tradition by indicating the 'textual flow' (the direction of transmission) between the texts found in each manuscript. To begin with, at the stage of 'pre-genealogical coherence,' a preliminary assessment is made of the relationship between surviving texts based on their similarity to each other. Information

⁴¹ Carroll D. Osburn, "Methodology in Identifying Patristic Citations in NT Textual Criticism," *NovT* 47.4 (2005): 313–43.

⁴² H.A.G. Houghton, "Augustine's Adoption of the Vulgate Gospels," *NTS* 54.3 (2008): 450–64.

⁴³ For further details of how to make an electronic transcription, see Parker, *Introduction*, 100–6. The conventions developed by the IGNTP and INTF are available from the "Resources" page at <http://www.igntp.org/>.

⁴⁴ New Testament examples may be seen in Matthew Spencer, Klaus Wachtel and Christopher Howe, "Representing Multiple Pathways of Textual Flow in Greek Manuscripts of the Letter of James Using Reduced Median Networks," *Computers and the Humanities* 38 (2004): 1–14; *id.*, "The Greek Vorlage of the Syra Harclensis: A Comparative Study on Method in Exploring Textual Genealogy," *TC – A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 7 (2002) <http://purl.org/TC/vol07/SWH2002/>.

⁴⁵ See Gerd Mink, "Problems of a highly contaminated tradition: the New Testament – Stemmata of variants as a source of a genealogy for witnesses," in *Studies in Stemmatology II*, ed. P. van Reenen *et al.* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004), 13–85. An introductory presentation of the CBGM may be downloaded from the INTF website (http://www.uni-muenster.de/INTF/Genealogical_method.html).

is entered for the unproblematic cases where the text underlying subsequent variant readings is easily established. The CBGM then combines these 'local stemmata' for each variant to generate an overall picture of the entire textual tradition. At the stage of 'genealogical coherence,' more complicated textual decisions can then be made on the basis of all the information stored in the system. The CBGM generates a list of potential ancestors for each witness based on the predominant direction of textual flow. This indicates the probability of a reading deriving from a close ancestor, being introduced from another part of the textual tradition or arising independently.⁴⁶

It is worth emphasizing that the decision at each point of variation remains the responsibility of the editor, based on traditional criteria and philological reasoning: the information stored in the system is simply a record of all previous choices. The CBGM means that each individual decision can now be informed by the whole of the tradition assessed thus far. The process is iterative, so that editorial choices can be revisited and amended based on an ever-increasing amount of information. The whole picture may be displayed as a diagram of the textual flow. Although this resembles a traditional stemma, it is important to note that it does not indicate the relationships between individual manuscripts, but between the texts contained within those manuscripts; it also does not reconstruct missing stages in the tradition, but only witnesses currently available. Worked examples of the CBGM are available in the guide to the "Genealogical Queries" program at <http://intf.uni-muenster.de/cbgi/en.html>. The interactive online application itself allows users to investigate the relationship between manuscripts using the data from the Catholic Epistles.

One result of the greater abundance of textual information now available through *TuT* and the *ECM* has been to erode the boundaries between the traditionally-defined local 'text-types' or 'recensions'. Whereas clusters of similar readings could be identified from a smaller sample of manuscripts and taken as characteristic of the "Alexandrian" or "Western" text, the percentage gaps separating these groups become ever slighter as more data is taken into consideration. Analyses which rely on statistical agreements with selected witnesses, such as the Claremont Profile Method or Comprehensive Profile Method, are therefore being superseded.⁴⁷ It has long been known that readings typical of the "Byzantine" text found in the majority of later witnesses are present in some of the earliest surviving manuscripts. The application of the CBGM, too, has demonstrated that the texts of manuscripts assigned to a similar text-type are often widely separated in the diagrams of overall textual flow. For this reason, several leading textual critics now advocate the abandonment of text-types altogether.⁴⁸ Even the "Byzantine" text appears to have developed as a gradual process rather than a single recension.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ e.g. Klaus Wachtel, "Towards a Redefinition of External Criteria: The Role of Coherence in Assessing the Origin of Variants," in *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies?* ed. H.A.G. Houghton and D.C. Parker (TS 3.6, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008), 109–29.

⁴⁷ See further Parker, *Introduction*, 168.

⁴⁸ See Parker, *Introduction*, 171–4 and 307; J.K. Elliott, "Textual Criticism," in *Searching for Meaning: An Introduction to Interpreting the New Testament* ed. Paula Gooder (London: SPCK, 2008) 50; Paul Foster, "Recent Developments and Future Directions in New Testament Textual Criticism: Report on a Conference at the University of Edinburgh," *JSNT* 29.2 (2006): 229–35.

⁴⁹ e.g. Klaus Wachtel, "The Byzantine Text of the Gospels: Recension or Process?" (Paper delivered at SBL Annual Meeting 2009, available online at http://www.uni-muenster.de/NTTextforschung/cbgi_presentation/ByzEvPDF.zip)

The study of scribal habits reflects ongoing interest in individual documents. Recent publications focus on P45,⁵⁰ P66,⁵¹ Codex Sinaiticus,⁵² the major manuscripts of Revelation,⁵³ and a detailed survey of six important New Testament papyri.⁵⁴ One resulting observation is that material is more commonly omitted than added in extant papyri, reinforcing the fact that the text-critical canon of *lectio breuior potior* must not be applied indiscriminately.⁵⁵ Although the identification of scribal practice has traditionally proceeded on the basis of 'singular readings' peculiar to a manuscript, the number of genuinely unique readings (not taking into account nonsense forms) is being diminished as more manuscripts are transcribed in full. The current definition adopted for a singular reading as one "which has no Greek support in the critical apparatus of Tischendorf's 8th edition"⁵⁶ will have to be reviewed with the publication of the *ECM*. A further methodological issue is that, given the gaps in our knowledge of the tradition, the presence of a particular form in the first-hand text of a given manuscript cannot necessarily be ascribed to the copyist's choosing but may have been inherited from the exemplar: the characteristics isolated by the study of singular and sub-singular readings apply not so much to the scribe as to the form of text found in the manuscript. Only the study of corrections and other annotations provides firm evidence for the intervention of individuals. This also poses problems for accounts of theologically-motivated alterations to the biblical text, made popular by Ehrman's *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*.⁵⁷ While certain variants may be interpreted theologically, only if a consistent pattern can be identified within a single manuscript are there grounds for identifying a particular bias – which was most probably not introduced by the copyist but by an editor during the preparation of the text for copying. The claim that "some scribes" modified the text by independently introducing identical variants is implausible (unless the separate emergence of the readings can be demonstrated) and fails to take account of the nature of the copying process.⁵⁸

5. Keeping up to Date

The current situation in New Testament textual criticism is set out admirably in D.C. Parker's new *Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and their Texts*. This survey offers a practical guide to the study of biblical manuscripts and the use of electronic tools, as

⁵⁰ J.K. Elliott, "Singular Readings in the Gospel Text of P45," in *The Earliest Gospels* ed. Charles Horton (JSNTSupp 258, London: T&T Clark, 2004), 122–31.

⁵¹ Peter M. Head, "Scribal Behaviour and Theological Tendencies in Singular Readings in P. Bodmer II (P66)," in *Textual Variation* ed. Houghton and Parker, 55–74.

⁵² Dirk Jongkind, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (TS 3.5, Piscataway NJ: Gorgias, 2007).

⁵³ Juan Hernández Jr, *Scribal Habits and Theological Influences in the Apocalypse. The Singular Readings of Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi* (WUNT 2.218. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

⁵⁴ James R. Royse, *Scribal Habits in Early Greek New Testament Papyri* (NTTSD 36. Leiden: Brill, 2008).

⁵⁵ See also Peter M. Head, "The Habits of New Testament Copyists. Singular Readings in the Early Fragmentary Papyri of John," *Bib* 85.3 (2004): 399–408.

⁵⁶ E.C. Colwell, "Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the Text," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship* ed. J. Philip Hyatt (Nashville TN: Abingdon, 1965), 372–3.

⁵⁷ Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture. The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York & Oxford: OUP, 1993); see also Wayne C. Kannaday, *Apologetic Discourse and the Scribal Tradition*. (SBLTCS 5. Atlanta GA: SBL, 2004).

⁵⁸ On this, see especially Ulrich Schmid, "Scribes and Variants – Sociology and Typology" in *Textual Variation* ed. Houghton and Parker, 1–23, and other papers in the same volume; Michael W. Holmes, "The Text of P46: Evidence of the Earliest 'Commentary' on Romans?" in *New Testament Manuscripts* ed. Kraus and Nicklas, 189–206.

well as a description of text-critical issues in each section of the New Testament. A second edition of *The Text of the New Testament in Contemporary Research: Essays on the Status Quaestionis*, edited by Ehrman and Holmes, is in preparation, with all contributions updated or rewritten. Metzger's introduction is available in a fourth edition, revised by Ehrman.⁵⁹ Elliott's *Bibliography* is regularly updated by articles in *Novum Testamentum*.⁶⁰ Several book series are devoted to textual criticism, including Brill's *New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents* (NTTSD), *Texts and Editions for New Testament Study* (TENTS) and *SBL Text Critical Series* (SBLTCS), De Gruyter's *Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung* (ANTF), the *Histoire du texte biblique* (HTB) of Éditions du Zèbre and *Texts and Studies third series* (TS) from Gorgias Press.

The most up-to-date information is, of course, to be found on the internet. Progress on the ECM and related publications may be seen on the websites of the INTF (<http://egora.uni-muenster.de/intf/>) and IGNTF (<http://www.igntp.org/>). BiBIL (<http://www.bibil.net/>) provides a searchable online bibliography of biblical studies: its "thesaurus" search may be used to return works identified as textual criticism. The *Pinakes* database (<http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/>) aims to bring together catalogue entries for all manuscripts of Greek texts predating the sixteenth century, supplementing the *Leuven Database of Ancient Books* (LDAB, <http://www.trismegistos.org/ldab/>). Finally, a number of active textual critics contribute to the *Evangelical Textual Criticism* weblog (<http://evangelicaltextualcriticism.blogspot.com/>), which features news, comment and links to related sites.

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Summary

This article provides an overview of recent developments in New Testament Textual Criticism. The four sections cover editions, manuscripts, citational evidence and methodology. Particular attention is paid to the *Editio Critica Maior*, the development of electronic resources, newly discovered manuscripts, and the Coherence Based Genealogical Method.

⁵⁹ Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament. Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* (Fourth revised edition. New York and Oxford: OUP, 2005).

⁶⁰ J.K. Elliott, *A Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts* (Second edition. SNTSMS 109. Cambridge: CUP, 2000); "Supplement I" *NovT* 46.4 (2004): 376–400; "Supplement II" *NovT* 49 (2007): 370–401.